

REMARKS

Claims 1-18, 20-35 and 37-51 were pending in this application when the present Office Action was mailed (September 30, 2003). Claim 1 has been amended in conformance with an agreement reached between the undersigned attorney and the Examiner during telephone conferences on December 9 and December 10, 2003. Accordingly, claims 1-18, 20-35 and 37-51 remain pending in this application.

In the September 30, 2003 Office Action, claims 1-18, 20-35 and 37-51 were rejected. More specifically, the status of the application in light of this Office Action is as follows:

(A) Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,171,4672 Weihs, et al. ("Weihs");

(B) Claims 10-13, 16-18, 27-30 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Weihs; and

(C) Claims 2-18, 20-35, and 37-51 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Weihs in view of IBM Technical Disclosure Bulletin, Volume 20, 1997, No. 2, pages 810 and 811 ("IBM Bulletin").

The undersigned attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for engaging in telephone conferences on December 9 and December 10, 2003 to discuss the Office Action and the applied references. During the telephone conferences, the Examiner agreed that an amendment proposed for claim 1 would clarify the aspects of the claim and that the Examiner would accordingly withdraw the Section 102 rejection of claim 1. The Examiner further agreed to withdraw the Section 103 rejections of claims depending from claim 1. The Examiner also agreed to withdraw the outstanding Section 103 rejections of claims 20, 37, 41 and claims depending therefrom, as the applied references do not adequately support a Section 103 rejection of these claims. The following remarks further summarize and expand upon the agreements reached between the undersigned attorney and the Examiner.

A. Response to the Section 102 Rejection

Claim 1 has been amended in conformance with the agreement reached between the undersigned attorney and the Examiner to clarify the manner in which electrical current is used to remove conductive material from the corner of a microelectronic substrate. Accordingly, the Section 102 rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn.

B. Response to the Section 103 Rejections on the Basis of Weihs

Claims 10-13 and 16-18 depend from claim 1. The Section 103 rejections of these claims should be withdrawn for the reasons discussed above and for the additional features of these claims, and in light of the agreement reached between the undersigned attorney and the Examiner during the December 9 and 10, 2003 telephone conferences. Claims 27-30 depend from claim 20 (discussed below) and claim 40 depends from claim 37 (discussed below). The Section 103 rejections of these claims should be withdrawn for the reasons discussed below with reference to claims 20 and 37, respectively, and in light of the agreement reached between the undersigned attorney and the Examiner during the December 9 and 10, 2003 telephone conferences.

C. Response to the Section 103 Rejections on the Basis of Weihs and the IBM Bulletin

Claim 20 is directed toward a method for processing a microelectronic substrate and includes, *inter alia*, removing conductive material from a corner of the substrate to at least partially blunt the corner by exposing the corner to an electrical potential via an electrolytic fluid. As at least part of the conductive material is removed from the corner, less electrical current is attracted to the corner to reduce the rate at which the conductive material is removed from the corner. As agreed to by the Examiner during the December 9 and 10, 2003 telephone conferences, neither of the applied references discloses or suggests such a feature. Accordingly, the Section 103 rejection of claim 20 should be withdrawn. The Section 103 rejections of claims 21-35, which depend

from claim 20, should be withdrawn for the reasons discussed above and for the additional features of these dependent claims.

Claim 37, also directed to a method for processing a microelectronic substrate, includes, *inter alia*, oxidizing conductive material at a corner of the substrate (with first and second electrodes proximate to and spaced apart from the microelectronic substrate), removing at least part of the oxidized material by exposure to an etchant, and reducing a rate at which material is removed from the corner by rounding the corner to reduce a flow of electrical current from at least one electrode to the corner. As agreed to by the Examiner during the December 9 and 10, 2003 telephone conferences, the applied references fail to disclose or suggest such a feature and accordingly fail to support a Section 103 rejection of claim 37. Therefore, the Section 103 rejection of claim 37 should be withdrawn. The Section 103 rejection of claims 38-40, which depend from claim 37 should be withdrawn for the reasons discussed above and for the additional features of these dependent claims.

Claim 41 is also directed to a method for processing a microelectronic substrate, and includes forming a conductive microelectronic feature in a recess in a conductive material of the microelectronic substrate. Claim 41 further includes controlling electromagnetic emanations from the feature by rounding the corner defined by the recess via a process that includes electrically oxidizing conductive material, removing oxidized material with an etchant, and, as the oxidized material is removed, attracting less electrical current to the corner to slow the rate at which the material is removed. As agreed to by the Examiner during the December 9 and 10, 2003 telephone conferences, the applied references failed to disclose or suggest such a feature. Accordingly, the Section 103 rejection of claim 41 should be withdrawn. The Section 103 rejections of claims 42-51 should be withdrawn for the reasons discussed above, and for the additional features of these dependent claims.

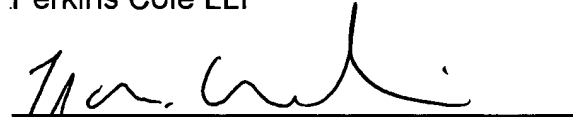
D. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the claims pending in the application comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and patentably define over the applied art. A Notice of Allowance is, therefore, respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-3257.

Respectfully submitted,

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